United Nations A/63/706–S/2009/74

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
5 February 2009

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-third session
Agenda item 15
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Sixty-fourth year

Identical letters dated 5 February 2009 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Upon instructions from my Government, I would like to draw your attention to the following grave incident.

On Wednesday night, 4 February 2009, two Israeli gunboats intercepted the Lebanese Brotherhood Vessel while it was in international waters trying to reach Gaza; they opened fire on the ship and rerouted it to Ashdod.

The boat was carrying humanitarian aid and medicine. Among its passengers was the former Greek Catholic Archbishop of Jerusalem, Monsignor Hilarion Capucci.

My Government condemns the Israeli actions and considers them a blatant and flagrant breach of international law and international humanitarian law. My Government calls on the international community to press Israel to immediately release the ship, ensure the safety of the passengers and allow the vessel and crew to reach their destination and deliver the humanitarian, medical and food assistance to the civilians in Gaza.

I kindly request that the present letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 15, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Caroline **Ziade**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

09-22970 (E) 050209